

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 13, 2011

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The Honorable Julius Genachowski  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

We are writing in regard to the Federal Communication Commission's effort to reform the Universal Service Fund's Lifeline and Link-Up compensation programs. A working telephone connection is a critical service in the lives of low-income families. While we are supportive of efforts to increase the effectiveness of the program, we urge the Commission to avoid reforms that would create unreasonable barriers for eligible subscribers to obtain service, or reforms that would unnecessarily disrupt service for eligible program participants.

A cell phone can literally be a lifeline for families and provide low-income families, in particular, the means to empower themselves. Phones can help people find and keep jobs, as well as manage family emergencies. We understand the need for policies that can ensure the Lifeline and Link-Up programs are sustainable and available for the families who rely on them. We applaud the FCC's efforts to prevent unauthorized participation in the Lifeline and Link-Up programs. The agency's interim order dated June 21, 2011, is a common-sense solution to make sure that a single subscriber can only receive a single benefit.

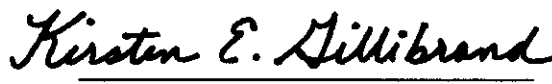
However, we also understand the FCC is considering whether to cap the fund and impose a mandatory minimum charge or dramatically different enrollment processes for all cell phone customers subsidized by the Lifeline and Link-Up programs. We believe the FCC should look for an interim solution that is the least intrusive but at the same time, helps prevent waste, fraud and abuse – including utilizing state resources and databases that can help verify customer information. Proposals to cap the fund could not only cost working households their access to telephone service, but could increase inequities of program eligibility among states.

We support meaningful reforms that advance the long-term sustainability of the program, particularly those aimed at eliminating waste, fraud and abuse in the program. The agency's interim order dated June 21, 2011, is a common-sense solution to make sure that a single subscriber can only receive a single benefit. However, a more permanent solution that does not create unreasonable burdens on these services is needed to manage this issue going forward.

We thank you for your consideration in regard to this matter.

Sincerely,

  
ROBERT MENENDIZ  
United States Senator

  
KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND  
United States Senator

  
SHERROD BROWN  
United States Senator

  
JEANNE SHAHEEN  
United States Senator

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

October 18, 2011

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI  
CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senate  
520 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Shaheen:

Thank you for your letter concerning the Commission's efforts to reform and strengthen the Universal Service Lifeline/LinkUp program. I appreciate your thoughts on this important program. Your letter has been entered into the record of the Commission's pending Lifeline/LinkUp Reform and Modernization proceeding.

The Commission is evaluating a number of proposals designed to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse, and otherwise improve the Universal Service Fund. At the same time, the Commission is seeking comment on whether any proposals in its *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM)* would impose unreasonable barriers to enrollment and participation by eligible consumers and households.

In addition, the Commission recently issued a Public Notice seeking targeted comment on four issues raised in the *Lifeline/Link Up Reform NPRM*, including the design and implementation of a Lifeline/Link-Up broadband pilot; the one-per-residential-address proposal; revising the definition of Link Up; and improving methods for verifying continued eligibility for the program. I believe that the Commission's analysis would benefit from further development of these issues in the record.

I look forward to working with you to ensure access to telecommunications and broadband for all Americans. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Julius Genachowski



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

October 18, 2011

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI  
CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Robert Menendez  
United States Senate  
528 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Menendez:

Thank you for your letter concerning the Commission's efforts to reform and strengthen the Universal Service Lifeline/LinkUp program. I appreciate your thoughts on this important program. Your letter has been entered into the record of the Commission's pending Lifeline/LinkUp Reform and Modernization proceeding.

The Commission is evaluating a number of proposals designed to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse, and otherwise improve the Universal Service Fund. At the same time, the Commission is seeking comment on whether any proposals in its *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM)* would impose unreasonable barriers to enrollment and participation by eligible consumers and households.

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I look forward to working with you to ensure access to telecommunications and broadband for all Americans. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Julius Genachowski



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

October 18, 2011

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI  
CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Sherrod Brown  
United States Senate  
713 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Brown:

Thank you for your letter concerning the Commission's efforts to reform and strengthen the Universal Service Lifeline/LinkUp program. I appreciate your thoughts on this important program. Your letter has been entered into the record of the Commission's pending Lifeline/LinkUp Reform and Modernization proceeding.

The Commission is evaluating a number of proposals designed to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse, and otherwise improve the Universal Service Fund. At the same time, the Commission is seeking comment on whether any proposals in its *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM)* would impose unreasonable barriers to enrollment and participation by eligible consumers and households.

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I look forward to working with you to ensure access to telecommunications and broadband for all Americans. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Julius Genachowski



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

October 18, 2011

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI  
CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senate  
478 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Gillibrand:

Thank you for your letter concerning the Commission's efforts to reform and strengthen the Universal Service Lifeline/LinkUp program. I appreciate your thoughts on this important program. Your letter has been entered into the record of the Commission's pending Lifeline/LinkUp Reform and Modernization proceeding.

The Commission is evaluating a number of proposals designed to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse, and otherwise improve the Universal Service Fund. At the same time, the Commission is seeking comment on whether any proposals in its *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM)* would impose unreasonable barriers to enrollment and participation by eligible consumers and households.

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I look forward to working with you to ensure access to telecommunications and broadband for all Americans. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Julius Genachowski